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Diana T Fritz 03/20/2007 03:51:55 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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SIPDIS  
TELEGRAM

November 02, 2003

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 4835 - ROUTINE)  
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, KPAO  
Captions: None  
Subject: IRAQI EXPATS: U.S. NEEDS TO LISTEN TO IRAQIS AGAIN, SET  
UP OBJECTIVE IRAQI SATELLITE TV  
Ref: None

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 04835

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: POL  
INFO: AMB PAO RSO DCM P/M ECON  
Laser1:  
INFO: PAO

DISSEMINATION: POL  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: CDA:RAALBRIGHT  
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY  
CLEARED: NONE

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RR RUEHC RHMFISS RUCNRAQ RHEHNSC RUEAIIA RHEFDIA  
RUEKJCS RUEKJCS RUCJACC  
DE RUEHAD #4835/01 3061213  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 021213Z NOV 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2266  
INFO RHMFISS/HQ COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTH BAGHDAD  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J2/UNMA//  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//OSD/NESA//  
RUCJACC/USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 004835

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR NEA/NGA, NEA/PD AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/13  
TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQI EXPATS: U.S. NEEDS TO LISTEN TO  
IRAQIS AGAIN, SET UP OBJECTIVE IRAQI  
SATELLITE TV

Ref: A) Abu Dhabi 1750, B) Abu Dhabi 1624

(U) Classified by Richard A. Albright, Charge  
d'Affaires, a.i., for Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: We recently met with two prominent Iraqi expats in the UAE. They recommended that the Coalition move quickly to establish an Iraqi satellite TV station to beam more balanced coverage of Iraqi developments to the Arab world. They wanted a new UN resolution that would solve the issue of compensation to Kuwait decreed by Security Council resolution ¶1483. They criticized the Coalition for not sealing Iraq's borders to prevent foreign resistance fighters from entering, and ex-Baathists from escaping. They also expressed concern that the U.S. is not doing as good a job of listening to its Iraqi friends' advice as it did before the war. The expats told us that the new Iraqi Ambassador in Abu Dhabi views the Coalition as a force of occupation. End summary.

¶2. (C) Polchief and senior PAO FSN visited with two members of the large Iraqi expat community in the UAE on October 25. In contrast to our last meetings with them in April (see refs A and B), the expats were more critical of the Coalition, but in the spirit of friendship, they continued to offer suggestions for improving the situation in Iraq. Dr. Ala'a Al-Tamimi was a senior official in the Iraqi Ministry of Industry until he fled the country in August ¶1991. After spending several years in Jordan, he transferred to the UAE where he works for the Abu Dhabi Department of Planning. Al-Tamimi, a Sunni who hails from Fallujah, told us he designed and oversaw the construction of one of Saddam's bunkers on the Tigris. Dr. Niazi Sadiq, a surgeon, has lived in the UAE for thirty years and hails from Baghdad. He is a Shi'a.

¶3. (C) Ala'a told us that he had traveled to Iraq recently and that based on what he saw, he concluded that the war was over. In his view, the current violence is an unsophisticated, isolated, resistance carried out in large part by Sunnis who converted to Wahhabism. Niazi agreed that the war to oust Saddam is over, but said a new war has begun involving outside parties, such as France, Germany, and Russia. Niazi theorized that the countries that opposed the Coalition in the first place now want to see the Coalition become bogged down in Iraq. He said he doubted Saddam "has the smarts" to carry out a well-orchestrated resistance.

¶4. (C) Our interlocutors urged the Coalition to quickly establish an Iraqi satellite TV station offering balanced coverage of Iraqi developments to Arab audiences. Arabs need an alternative to Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, they said. They were critical of Abu Dhabi TV for allowing former Iraqi Minister of Information Al Sahaf far more airtime than they do for other Iraqi points of view. Ala'a said he has written letters complaining about Abu Dhabi TV's broadcasts of Al Sahaf, but to no avail. "All we want is equal time," he added.

¶5. (C) The expats also want the UN to deal with the issue of Iraqi compensation for Kuwait decreed by UNSC resolution 1483. They were thankful for the multi-billion dollar pledges in Madrid, but said the compensation issue also needs to be resolved. "The Iraqi people think they have to pay for something that was done against their will," Ala'a told us. "The U.S. should push Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to give up pursuing this compensation."

¶6. (C) Niazi and Ala'a were generally critical of Coalition actions in Iraq since the end of the war. They said it was a mistake to disband the Iraqi army and police force because it left many without a way to earn a living, and may have led some to join the armed resistance. They urged the Coalition to give Iraqis more control over the security apparatus by training Iraqis rather than introducing foreign troops, such as those from Turkey, into Iraq. "Iraqis were against Saddam Hussein," Ala'a said. "Had we wanted to fight with him, the U.S. would still be at Umm Qasr." Our interlocutors also said it was a mistake to allow individuals such as Mohammed Saeed Al Sahaf, Mohammed Al Douri, Dhafer Al Aani, Shaker Hamed, and the daughters and family of Saddam Hussein, to leave Iraq instead of turning them over to the Iraqi justice system. Furthermore, they criticized the Coalition for not sealing Iraq's borders at the time of the conflict to prevent foreign resistance fighters from entering, and ex-Baathists from escaping. "All the people who wanted to fight the U.S. flooded in," Ala'a said. One of the best steps the Coalition could take is to begin listening to the advice of Iraqi friends again, Niazi said. "Before the war, the U.S. wanted to listen to Iraqis. Now, you won the war. Why don't you want to beat the terrorists?"

¶7. (SBU) The Iraqi expats told us they were pleased to have a functioning Iraqi Embassy in Abu Dhabi that, "for once, serves the interests of the Iraqi people instead of the interests of Saddam Hussein." However, the career diplomat who is serving as their ambassador still worries them. In a meeting with Iraqi expats, Ambassador Qusai Mahdi Saleh reportedly referred to the Coalition as a "force of occupation." The expats corrected him by saying the Coalition was "a force of liberation."

ALBRIGHT